



# NEWS FROM NOAA

## NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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### **ELFIN COVE, ALASKA RESIDENTS MARY JO LORD-WILD AND JIM WILD HONORED FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE VOLUNTEER OBSERVER PROGRAM**

Recognizing 30 years of service to America, NOAA's National Weather Service has named Elfin Cove, Alaska resident Mary Jo Lord-Wild as a 2005 recipient of the agency's John Campanius Holm Award for outstanding service in the Cooperative Weather Observer Program. The award is the agency's second most prestigious with only 25 presented this year to deserving cooperative weather observers around the country.

"Cooperative observers are the bedrock of weather data collection and analysis," said Brig. Gen. David L. Johnson, USAF (Ret.), director of NOAA's National Weather Service. "Satellites, high-speed computers, mathematical models, and other technological breakthroughs have brought great benefits to the Nation in terms of better forecasts and warnings. But without the century-long accumulation of accurate weather observations taken by volunteer observers, scientists could not begin to adequately describe the climate of the United States."

Laura Furgione, director of the National Weather Service Alaska Region, will present the award during a ceremony held at 10 a.m., September 27 at the National Weather Service Forecast Office in Juneau, located at 8500 Mendenhall Loop Road. Kimberly Vaughan of the Juneau office nominated Mary Jo Lord-Wild for the award.

The National Weather Service's Cooperative Weather Observer Program has given scientists and researchers continuous observational data since the program's inception more than a century ago. Today, some 11,700 volunteer observers participate in the nationwide program to provide daily reports on temperature, precipitation and other weather factors such as snow depth, river levels and soil temperature.

Mrs. Lord-Wild has voluntarily observed and reported daily weather conditions for 30 years. Mr. Wild's 25 years of dedication as a volunteer weather observer will also be highlighted during the ceremony.

Weather records retain their importance as time goes by. Long and continuous records provide an accurate picture of a locale's normal weather, and give climatologists and others a basis for predicting future trends. These data are invaluable for scientists studying floods, droughts and heat and cold waves. At the end of each month, observers mail their records to the National Climatic Data Center for publication in "Climatological Data" or "Hourly Precipitation Data."

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The first extensive network of cooperative stations was set up in the 1890s as a result of an 1890 act of Congress that established the U.S. Weather Bureau. Many of the stations have even longer histories. John Campanius Holm's weather records, taken without benefit of instruments in 1644 and 1645, were the earliest known recorded observations in the United States.

Many historic figures have also maintained weather records, including Benjamin Franklin, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson maintained an almost unbroken record of weather observations between 1776 and 1816, and Washington took weather observations just a few days before he died. The Jefferson and Holm awards are named for these weather observation pioneers.

NOAA's National Weather Service is the primary source of weather data, forecasts and warnings for the United States and its territories. NOAA's National Weather Service operates the most advanced weather and flood warning and forecast system in the world, helping to protect lives and property and enhance the national economy.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners and nearly 60 countries to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes.

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On the Web:

NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>

NOAA's National Weather Service: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov>

NWS Weather Forecast Office in Juneau, Alaska: <http://pajk.arh.noaa.gov>